

The Pendleton Files: Man had history with Mahomet police

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MAHOMET — The late Dracy "Clint" Pendleton, whose alleged shooting of a Mahomet police officer sparked a statewide manhunt that ended in a shootout with authorities in southern Illinois, had two previous run-ins with local law enforcement, newly released documents show.

On Monday, nearly seven months after the Saturday-night traffic stop in his village that prompted the weeklong pursuit, Mahomet Police Chief Mike Metzler made available to media outlets a slew of files, including police videos, crime-scene photos, transcripts of interviews with officers involved in the case and Mr. Pendleton's autopsy report.

What wasn't included was any detail about the southern Illinois manhunt or who fired the fatal bullet during the May 15 shootout in Shawnee National Forest — members of the FBI SWAT team, state police or Mr. Pendleton himself.

Open-records requests filed in recent weeks by The News-Gazette with state police and the FBI were denied, with officials citing the "ongoing" nature of the investigation.

According to the autopsy performed by the office of Pope County Coroner Mark Aly, the body of Mr. Pendleton had 12 gunshot wounds, two of which were covered with Band-Aids, presumably wounds he sustained during his scuffle with Mahomet police on May 7. One was on his left thigh, the other on the left side of his neck.

The coroner ruled the cause of death to be a laceration of the aorta due to multiple gunshot wounds, including multiple ones to the right side of his chest, one to his head and one to his heart. The manner of death was ruled homicide.

May 7: Stopped for not having taillights on

The ordeal that made national news began on May 7 with a traffic stop. It was 10:37 p.m., a quiet Saturday night in Mahomet.

According to documents, Mr. Pendleton was pulled over as he entered the village on Oak Street after Mahomet Officer Ryan Rich noticed the pickup truck the Bellflower man was driving didn't have its taillights illuminated.

Mr. Pendleton appeared agitated during the stop, telling the officer that police harass him and they needed to stop, Rich said later.

Rich issued Mr. Pendleton warnings for the infraction and for failing to notify the secretary of state's office of an address change.

As Mr. Pendleton drove away from the stop, he yelled obscenities at the officer, which can be seen on the dashcam video released Monday.

During the stop, Rich noticed a white pickup truck stopping nearby. It was later revealed that the driver was Kyle Dollahon, Mr. Pendleton's half-brother.

A little while later, another Mahomet officer, Jeremy Scharlow, saw the same pickup, which he said was driving without its headlights on. Scharlow followed it to 504 S. Vine Street. He stopped just past that address, intending to let the driver know his lights weren't on.

What Scharlow didn't know is that Mr. Pendleton had already arrived at the home he shared with Dollahon. Shortly after Scharlow pulled up, he said, he was attacked by Mr. Pendleton, who called him out by name before he could even completely exit his vehicle.

Scharlow punched back and used his Taser on Mr. Pendleton, though neither had much effect.

According to the reports, Mr. Pendleton then produced a small handgun and began shooting, striking Scharlow in the arm. After the officer returned fire, Mr. Pendleton retreated to the home, returning moments later carrying a long rifle.

He shot and struck Scharlow's squad car numerous times, according to reports.

Mr. Pendleton then got back in his truck, rammed Scharlow's squad car and fled the area.

Scharlow was evacuated from the area by fellow officer Rebecca Bragg and taken to the Corn Belt Fire Department for treatment. He was later transported to Carle Foundation Hospital in Urbana.

2013: History started with wife being pulled over

It wasn't the first time Scharlow and Mr. Pendleton's paths crossed.

In August 2013, it was revealed Monday, Scharlow stopped Evelyn Pendleton, the deceased's wife, for speeding. During their contact, the officer noted that she was extremely upset. She told him that she was five months' pregnant and that her husband had just left her after a fight at their home, according to interviews.

Scharlow informed METCAD, which dispatched the Champaign County Sheriff's Office to investigate the domestic incident. But when deputies arrived, both Mr. Pendleton and his wife were uncooperative, saying it was none of their business, according to reports. Both also denied that any physical altercation had occurred.

A second encounter came six days later, when Scharlow responded to call of a disturbance at the Mobil Super Pantry near the corner of East Oak and South Lombard streets in Mahomet.

Witnesses said a man, later identified as Mr. Pendleton, was yelling obscenities and racial slurs at a black man who was walking into the gas station.

"Hey, you don't belong in this town, (expletive)," Pendleton told the man, according to the report.

Mr. Pendleton and the man exchanged words, though there was no physical altercation. The man's mother called 9-1-1 and provided a license plate number that was registered to Mr. Pendleton's vehicle.

After another witness attempted to calm Mr. Pendleton and told him "everyone is welcome" in Mahomet, Mr. Pendleton got in his vehicle and drove away.

Scharlow responded to the call and later followed up with Mr. Pendleton at his home. Scharlow spotted he and Evelyn in the back yard and concluded that Mr. Pendleton matched the description of the man involved in the incident at the gas station.

He recognized Evelyn from their previous encounter.

As Scharlow approached the house, Mr. Pendleton walked toward him quickly and "with a purpose, clenching his fists loosely," the officer said.

Scharlow, dressed in full uniform, identified himself verbally as Mr. Pendleton yelled "Do you have a warrant?" He then informed Scharlow that he was on his property and that if he didn't have a warrant, he needed to leave.

Fearful that Mr. Pendleton was going to hit him, Scharlow put up his left arm to block a potential strike while also unsecuring his Taser.

Scharlow then turned on his Taser, aimed it and informed Mr. Pendleton that he was under arrest. He ordered Mr. Pendleton to turn around and place his hands behind his back before notifying METCAD that he had a subject at Taser point.

Scharlow said Mr. Pendleton asked him if he felt like a big man holding the Taser. To prevent Mr. Pendleton from lunging at him, Scharlow ordered him to drop to his knees.

"After approximately the sixth time, he complied," Scharlow said in the report.

'Mahomet is gonna be as bad as Champaign'

As Mr. Pendleton's wife approached the two men, Scharlow lifted his left arm and ordered her to stop. Her husband then jumped to his feet, clenched his fists, took a step toward Scharlow and yelled at him not to threaten his wife.

Mr. Pendleton was then ordered back to his knees but didn't comply, though he didn't come any closer.

He then yelled at Scharlow "You're wrong" and "If we keep this up, Mahomet is gonna be as bad as Champaign because of those people," presumably referring to the incident at the gas station with the black man.

Officer Kevin Beckett then arrived to assist Scharlow and placed Mr. Pendleton in handcuffs. Scharlow secured Mr. Pendleton in the back passenger seat of the squad car after denying his request to let him kiss Evelyn goodbye.

Evelyn Pendleton was informed by Scharlow of why her husband was arrested. She said she understood why Scharlow feared for his safety but said her husband wouldn't harm anyone, according to interviews.

Scharlow informed her that her husband was being taken to the Champaign County Satellite Jail in Urbana and he would be able to post bond later.

She thanked him, the officer said later.

During the ride to Urbana, things got tense. Mr. Pendleton verbally berated Scharlow, asking him to pull over so they could fight. He accused Scharlow of trying to enslave the population and said that the government — not the hard-working white man — was the enemy.

Mr. Pendleton said he was angry that Scharlow showed up to his home armed. He then began yelling "almost in a growl" and stated that "you wonder where all the real men are, they're dead or locked in cages."

Scharlow said Mr. Pendleton then yelled something in German.

Once at the jail, Scharlow explained to Mr. Pendleton that he was going to read him his rights, then asked him about the incident at the gas station. Mr. Pendleton opted to remain silent, though he took one more opportunity to berate the officer for pointing his Taser.

State's attorney: No wrongdoing by Scharlow

The morning of May 8, Scharlow was released from Carle, fewer than six hours after his initial encounter. Mr. Pendleton was charged with aggravated battery with a firearm to a police officer and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Included in Monday's batch of documents was a letter from First Assistant State's Attorney Steven Ziegler, who said he determined through witness statements, audio and video recordings and physical evidence that Scharlow was attacked by Mr. Pendleton without cause or provocation and that the officer acted appropriately in response.

There were no indications of any wrongdoing on his part, Ziegler concluded.

The FBI and state police took the lead on the case after Mr. Pendleton was spotted in Shawnee National Forest. The FBI issued an arrest warrant for Mr. Pendleton for unlawful flight to avoid prosecution and offered a reward up to \$10,000 for information leading to his capture.

On May 15, eight days after he was initially stopped, Mr. Pendleton was found dead following a shootout with authorities in Eddyville.

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